

TO: AHD

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FROM: EFH

ANCESTRY, ROOTS AND ORIGINS OF THE OFFICE OF POLICY COORDINATION

The modern concept of psychological warfare germinated in the World War I period. The fundamental disagreements and misunderstandings as to what it was and how it should function fall most readily into focus if 1917-18 is used as the starting point.

At that time public opinion and government policy in the US were both more naive and more idealistic than after the disillusionments, frustrations and betrayals of two world wars. The situation at that time is summarized in the "Proposed Basic Estimate on Psychological Warfare", published as OSS 1/5, 28 August '42 (Secret), pages 7 and 5:

"The aggressive and humanitarian foreign policy and war aims of President Wilson proved to be extremely effective weapons of psychological warfare, both in converting enemy peoples and in persuading those of neutral countries to sympathy with and active support for our war objectives. One of the main tasks of the propaganda agencies, including the subversive activities, was ensuring that Wilson's speeches were widely and accurately known within Germany. . . . American propaganda in the last war was extremely effective in attaining immediate objectives and played no inconsiderable part in the final collapse of the Central Powers. Non-fulfillment of the promises implicit in Wilson's fourteen points and repudiation by the American people of the League of Nations did, however, undermine public confidence in America among both enemy and allied peoples and have seriously handicapped us to this day." *

What this meant was that the United States simultaneously came of age as a world power and forfeited the right ever again to play the

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role of starry-eyed Galahad in the concert of nations. But while it lasted, the World War I period constituted the ideal situation for propaganda: the true policy and the chief spokesman for the United States were the best propaganda and the most effective propagandist for US objectives. The subsequent undermining of public confidence in America was not confined to other peoples. Since 1920 US public opinion on international affairs has been befuddled and divided, and the patriotic and humanitarian fervor of World War I has never been approximated.

In the opposite camp, the rise of modern totalitarianism set the stage for a harmony between policy and propaganda almost equal, but quite opposite, to that prevailing in the US in 1917-18. In the latter, the honesty and frankness of national policy could be carried over into propaganda. In the former, the falsity and duplicity of propaganda was duplicated in national policy.

While the Nazis were evolving the doctrine of the Big Lie and public gullibility to the preposterous, the techniques of public relations exemplified by ghost-writing and opinion sampling were maturing in the domestic and commercial fields in the US, along with advances in the baser aspects of applied psychology. Thus potential technicians of modern psychological warfare were being developed in the US in a cognate, though less infernal, field. While the US developed far more refined tools which could readily be beaten from psychological plowshares into psychological swords, the Nazis, and to a lesser extent the Japanese, developed far more direct and uninhibited

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employment of crasser tools. This was exemplified later in the crude false notes struck by Tokyo Rose and other synthetic practitioners of the American idiom on both war fronts.

At the same time, but less noticeably because out of the main stream of wartime attention, the Soviet Union was maintaining its pre-eminent role in matters subversive, with the advantages both of refined and long-tested tools and of pristine freedom from the inhibitions of civilization.

By 1941 there were influential individuals in the US who held that conscious manipulation and deception of public opinion, primarily in enemy territory, was an essential instrument of war. This evolving doctrine inevitably went farther than the use of propaganda media in the strict sense of the word. It went farther because there was no stopping point for an undertaking of psychological warfare, particularly under the terms of total war, until the traditional media of influencing opinion had been far exceeded. The swaying of opinion is a sufficient end only when dealing with a political system which is directly responsive to public opinion. Under democratic representative government, the election machinery provides a channel for the automatic translation of public opinion into action. Against a totalitarian police state, the manipulation of public opinion becomes a successful instrument of war only when the further step of inducing action - and action against great difficulties - is incorporated. Under conditions of total war, propaganda in the narrowest sense shades into gray propaganda, black propaganda, subversive direct action, and by imperceptible gradations

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continues all the way to full fledged resistance and guerrilla warfare.

Outstanding among the proponents of psychological warfare was Colonel (later General) William J. Donovan. In his early advocacy, he repeatedly defined psychological warfare, and it was primarily his definition which finally appeared in OSS 1/5 in August, 1942, page 2: and JPWC #20, 18 July '42.

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"The integrated use of all means, moral and physical, - other than those of recognized military operations, but including the psychological exploitation of the result of those recognized military actions, - which tend to destroy the will of the enemy to achieve victory and to damage his political or economic capacity to do so; which tend to deprive the enemy of the support, assistance or sympathy of his allies or associates or of neutrals, or to prevent his acquisition of such support, assistance or sympathy; or which tend to maintain, increase or create the will to victory of our own people and allies and to maintain, increase or acquire the support, assistance and sympathy of neutrals."

This definition was couched in general and non-specific terms, as indeed were all official pronouncements in this field during the early stages of World War II. This tendency to becloud or evade reflected the strong distaste for such activities which was still widespread within the Government. A more specific definition, which remains official doctrine today, is that of covert operations found in NSC 10/2, 18 June '48,

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"All acts (except noted herein) which are conducted or sponsored by this Government against hostile foreign states or groups or in support of friendly foreign states or groups, but which are so planned and executed that any US Government responsibility for them is not evident to unauthorized persons and that, if uncovered, the US Government can plausibly disclaim any responsibility for them." The definition goes on to enumerate the types of such operations as "any covert activities relative to propaganda; economic warfare; preventive direct action including sabotage, anti-sabotage, demolitions and evacuation measures; subversion against hostile states including assistance to underground resistance movements, guerrillas and refugee liberation groups; support of indigenous anti-Communist elements in threatened countries." The exceptions noted above are then listed in the sentence: "Such operations do not include armed conflict by recognized forces, espionage, counterespionage or cover and deception for military operations."

Prior to July, 1941, the only element of the Government directed toward such activities was the Psychological Warfare Branch of the Military Intelligence Service. This was focussed on the tactical scale of operations, and not designed for an integrated approach on the world-wide scale suited to a world war. On 11 July '41, Donovan won an oblique authorization to launch such activities by the Presidential Order of that date creating the ^{Coordinator of} ~~Committee of~~ Information and appointing him as its director. The authority specifically granted by the order was "to collect and analyze information which may bear

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upon the national security and carry out, when requested by the President, such supplementary activities as may facilitate the securing of (such) information." It requires much reading between the lines to interpret this Order as creating an organization for psychological warfare, or covert operations. However, such between-the-lines text is amply provided by Donovan's long and vigorous campaign of which this order was the culmination. From the time he was first summoned to the White House, in July, 1940, Donovan's thesis of psychological warfare was a program of successive and related phases of secret intelligence, sabotage, and guerrilla resistance, with propaganda a basic factor throughout. This basic factor of propaganda was assured to COI by the inclusion of the Foreign Information Service, under Robert E. Sherwood, as one of its major subdivisions. However, at this point the personalities involved became significant, inasmuch as Sherwood held the basic premise that truth was the best propaganda and looked upon the broadcasting facilities of FIS as a means of spreading the true facts of the war throughout the world. While this mission was an important part of the whole objective of COI as Donovan visualized it, it made no provision for the gray and black propaganda which were logical stepping stones toward the later phases of sabotage and guerrilla resistance.

The shift of the US from a State of Emergency to a State of War on 7 December '41 altered the fabric of government into which COI was being woven by increasing the area of responsibility and authority of the military services. Not only did considerations of war strategy

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[redacted] supersede considerations of diplomacy in Washington, but much of the world abroad came to be included in theaters of operations, in which the theater commander enjoyed supreme authority over all US enterprises and personnel. For much of the critical territory of the world, [redacted] the Joint Chiefs of Staff were the sole and unchallenged line of command and authority, the arbiters of all US activity. The organization which Donovan sought to forge was clearly directed at and against the enemy, clearly an auxiliary for the achievement of military victory. Hence the fact of war and the nature of COI combined to bring it closer to the military department of the Government.

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In the haste and ferment that followed Pearl Harbor, the JCS came into existence early in February, '42. They quite promptly gave attention to the subject of psychological warfare. Joint Secretariat ((JCS) Memo #1 and Joint Planning Staff #7, 18 March '42, created the Joint Psychological Warfare Committee and delineated its functions. These functions were:

" (a) to initiate, formulate and develop plans for psychological warfare,

" (b) to collaborate with interested nations to the end that all psychological warfare is in accord with strategy approved by the Joint United States Chiefs of Staff,

" (c) to designate the executive agencies for implementing approved psychological warfare plans,

" (d) to submit psychological warfare plans to the joint United States Chiefs of Staff through the Joint Staff Planners."

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The representatives of the Army and Navy on the JPWC were field-grade officers, and there was little prestige (force) behind it. At its first meeting, it was noted that the question of what agency would execute PW plans had not been settled. As to COI, the question was merely raised as to whether or not the JPWC could request COI to perform specific tasks. Thus the JPWC began as a headquarters without a command, an organization that could lay plans, subject to JCS approval, but that had no field forces to carry out such plans. COI, meanwhile, was building up an appropriate field force for executing such plans, but as an appendage of the Executive Office of the President and outside of the military family, it had no channel of command to the theaters of operations where plans would be carried into effect. As a matter of fact, the subject of COI relationship to the military services had been canvassed at the time of its creation. President Roosevelt decided against the medium of a Military Order to establish COI. He also decided against the medium of an Executive Order. The actual document of 11 July '41 dodged the question and started out: "By virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States and as Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, it is ordered as follows:" The reason for this equivocation was a feeling that the whole subject was so sensitive, so radical a departure from traditional American methods, and so controversial within the official Government family, that it had better seep into existence rather than be rammed forcibly down unwilling gullets.

Donovan was quick to recognize the natural ties between COI on the one hand and the JCS in general and the JPWC in particular on the

other. On 30 March '42, he addressed a memorandum to the President, concurring in the recommendation that the JCS had just made that COI be brought closer to the JCS. This was four days after the third meeting of the JPWC, at which Donovan and three principal aids had appeared, and Donovan had stated he would work with the JPWC in the implementation of PW plans for the Balkans and North Africa.

When the June wedding took place, the bride was not allowed to take all her belongings to her new home. The Military Order of 13 June '42, which reated the Office of Strategic Services, placed it under the jurisdiction of the JCS. But the Foreign Information Service, under Sherwood, was lifted bodily out of the new organization and placed in the newly created Office of War Information. Thus the evolving Government machinery for psychological warfare was nominally deprived of the basic implement of psychological warfare, propaganda. But since COI had acquired this implement by tacit agreement rather than by specific directive, its formal loss was not permanently to prove an actual and substantive loss. The split of COI and the creation of OWI and OSS did put two rival and not too well coordinated agencies into the same field of activity.

To provide such coordination, the Executive Order of 13 June '42, creating OWI, established within that agency a Committee on War Information Policy, and included a representative of the JPWC in the membership of that committee. Eight days later; on 21 June '42, the JCS reciprocated by providing for a representative of OWI on the Advisory Committee established within the JPWC. Thus, in effect, OSS sat under OWI in OWI's joint policy-making machinery, and OWI sat under OSS in the latter's joint policy-advising machinery. This, in the field of psychological

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warfare, was the culmination of the Roosevelt method of placing two trusted and respected subordinates at loggerheads in the belief that perpetual conflict would sharpen their capabilities.

From the standpoint of the JCS, creation of OSS resulted in two agencies under JCS jurisdiction concerned with psychological warfare. The JPWC was concerned only with headquarters staff work in this field. OSS was concerned both with planning and operating, and it was concerned with collecting clandestine intelligence and providing processed intelligence for the national security as well as with psychological warfare. JCS response to this situation was prompt and comprehensive. JCS #68, 21 June '42, of which the Advisory Committee referred to in the preceding paragraph was one provision, reorganized the JPWC. Its reorganized membership was of much higher rank than their predecessors. Donovan was named the chairman and the staff chiefs for both intelligence and operations of both Army and Navy constituted the balance of the membership. The same five elements of the armed services were represented on a working sub-committee which was established by the same order. The permanent members of the advisory committee represented the State Department, Board of Economic Warfare and Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, as well as the OWI. A short time later, the JPWC was made the official channel between OSS and the JCS. Since Donovan was the head of both, this was a matter of administrative detail only. However, it did provide an automatic clearing-house of OSS projects and operational plans on their way up to the JCS for formal approval and authorization of support from the Army and Navy.

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The JPWC had a life of only nine months, going out of existence by authority of JCS 115/4/D, 23 December '42. This directive replaced it with a Planning Group set up within OSS, with representatives of Army, Navy, State, and OSS. It should be noted that while OSS as an instrument of psychological warfare was assuming a more natural place in the Government structure under the JCS, as an intelligence agency it was losing breadth, particularly in its mission of providing processed intelligence for the national security. Its overall evaluating function, as envisioned at its birth, required that it be directly subordinate to the President if it was to process intelligence at the super-departmental level. Its operational activities, both in intelligence and psychological warfare, called for the status it now enjoyed as a part of the military establishment. Ideal location in the Government for the two functions appeared incompatible. Today, with the two functions vying for the attention and resources of CIA, the problem remains.

The principal loss to OSS resulting from the creation of OWI was its nominal exclusion from the field of propaganda. While this was never accepted at face value, there ensued a long period of uncertainty. The Morale Operations Branch of OSS was established on 3 January '43. It led an uncertain and truncated existence, however, until the issuance of JCS 155/11/D, 26 October '43. This directive provided a firm charter for OSS propaganda activities, and this charter in turn survived thereafter during the life of the Agency. It solved the dilemma of OWI primacy in the field of propaganda by (1) specifying

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that target areas should be limited to enemy or enemy-controlled territory and (2) enumerating its propaganda instruments as false rumors, freedom stations, false leaflets and false documents.

Complete harmony and understanding between OSS and OWI was never achieved. However, when directives conflicted, theater headquarters and sometimes lower echelons were in the fortunate position of having a choice of orders to carry out. Fundamentally, since OSS was a part of the JCS family and OWI was not, the former was in the better tactical position and operated from much closer to the horse's mouth. The real loss was in the failure to enlist the white propaganda facilities of OWI in legitimate measures of cooperation with OSS and the Military Establishment.

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